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Preach'd before an

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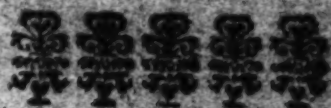
Messengers, Elders, and Brethren,

A T

The Meeting-House in *Dunnings-Alley* in
Bishopsgate-Street, London,

On Wednesday the 23d of *May, 1711.*

By GEORGE KELLEY.



L O N D O N,

Printed by J. Darby in *Bartholomew-Close.* 1712.

(Price 3 d.)

A
SERMON

Preached before an

ASSSEMBLY

OF

Ministers, Elders, and Brethren

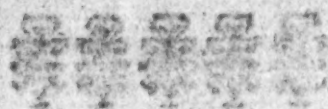


The Meeting-house in Fenchurch-street in

London, on

On Wednesday the 23rd of May, 1711.

By GEORGE KELLEY.



L O N D O N

Printed by J. Smith in Fenchurch-street. 1711.

(Price 3d.)

Honoured Brethren,

AT your Desire I have printed this Discourse with some little Enlargement. Considering what a polite Age we live in, and how nice and critical Men are grown, I had almost resolv'd to have beg'd your Excuse, and not have publish'd it; but the frequent Sollicitation and Importunity of my Friends, and some of you that heard it, join'd with the Usefulness and Seasonableness of the Subject, have at last intirely prevail'd with me (being also assur'd of your Candour and Good Nature) to accept this in the room of a better Performance.

We are so unhappy, as to live in an Age in which Religion and the Christian Life are greatly neglected, and Contention and Divisions are too apparent, where the strictest Friendship and Unity shou'd be manifest; and the excellent Virtues of Charity and Moderation are become too much out of fashion. Now if what I have here made publick does but effect any thing towards a Cure of those growing Evils, and forward us in the Discharge of our Duty towards God and one to another; I shall then have my Aim, and think

(4)

it a sufficient Recompence for my Labour. And to this end I commit both it and you to the Blessing of our Good and Gracious God, who is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance among all them that are sanctify'd. I am yours in all the Offices of Love and Friendship,

G. KELLEY.

PHILIP

• PHILIPPIANS I. 27.

Only let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your Affairs, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.

THE holy Apostle St. Paul being called of the Lord, and warn'd by the Holy Ghost in a Divine Vision, to go into Macedonia and preach the Gospel, began it in the City of *Philippi*; and having plant- Acts 16.
ed a Church there, he travels from Place to Place 9, 11, 12.
till he came to *Rome*, where (for the Cause of Christ) he was in Bonds, and probably in Necessity and great Straits: Which the *Philippians* understanding, they send *Epaphroditus* their Mes- Phil. 4.
senger, with a liberal and generous Supply to 18.
his Wants, by whom St. Paul sends this Affectionate Epistle to them: The main Scope and Design of which was, to excite them to persevere in Faith and Piety, and other Christian Vertues, and not be discourag'd by his present Sufferings; to warn them (as the *Greek* Scholiasts also think) against Seducers and Judaizing Teachers; who Chap. 3.
might else corrupt and pervert them, by mixing the Law and the Gospel together. Too many such there were who rose up in the Church,

Acts 15.
and the E-
pistle to
Galat.

Church, and caus'd much Trouble and Disputa-
tion, (as you may see) imposing on the Christi-
ans Circumcision and the Shadows of the Law,
notwithstanding they were abrogated; placing
the greatest stress upon them: which was a plain
detraction from the Glory and Perfection of the
Gospel-Ministration.

Now the Apostle being very sollicitous about
his beloved *Philippians*, gives them most excel-
lent Advice, with regard both to Doctrine and
Life; and in a special manner, as in the Words
of our Text, to see that their *Conversation was*
becoming the Gospel of Christ, with one Mind stri-
ving together for the Faith of the Gospel. The Con-
nexion of which words with the foregoing Dis-
course, is briefly this. In Verses 22, 23. St. Paul
expresses his great strait; *Whether to live or dye,*
what to choose, says he, *I wot not.* There were
weighty Reasons to incline him both ways; his
Love and Desire for the Fruition of Christ on
the one hand, and the Good of the Church on
the other, putting him, in respect of Choice,
upon an Equilibrium. But this he was satisfy'd
in, that to abide a while longer in this earthly
Tabernacle, would be for their good. And be-
ing persuaded of this, he expresses himself with
a sort of Assurance and Certainty that he should
not in this first Imprisonment at Rome be put
to Death, but his Life should be preserv'd, and
his Liberty restor'd for the advantage of the
Believers. Some think he knew this by a spe-
cial and immediate Revelation of God, such as
he sometimes before had. Others think he did
not know this by a certain and immediate Know-
ledg, as seems to be intimated by *Chap. 2. ver. 17.*
but rather as a likely Conjecture and Hope, from
the several Circumstances of the matter. But
in

Ver. 24.

Ver. 25.

See 2 Tim.

4. 16, 17.

Acts 16.

9, 10.

and 23.

11.

in the mean time, as if the Apostle should have said, However it may go with me, whether I am set at Liberty, or suffer Martyrdom for the sake of Christ; as for your part, that which highly concerns you who have been call'd into the Fellowship of the blessed Gospel, is to deport yourselves suitable to that State, which thro Grace you are brought into. I have been the larger upon the Context, that I might render the subsequent Matter the more plain to the meanest Capacity.

In the words of our Text there are three things which offer themselves to our consideration.

I. A strict and comprehensive Charge given, for our Duty commanded; which is to have our Conversation suitable to, and becoming the Gospel of Christ.

II. Here is a particular Exhortation to a firm and constant Union and Agreement one with another, in the Profession of our holy Religion; signify'd by *standing fast in one Spirit, with one Mind.*

III. We are enjoin'd and requir'd unanimously to exert our utmost endeavours in the respective Stations wherein we are plac'd, to keep, defend, and propagate the Faith of the Gospel. And this is call'd a *striving* for it.

And I think these three Observations take in the Scope and Design of our Subject.

I shall begin with the first Observation, and follow this Method.

I shall open and explain the Terms us'd by the Apostle to express this Command and important Duty:

2. I shall endeavour to shew what that Conversation is, which comports with and becomes the Gospel of Christ.

3. I shall lay before you some of those Reasons and weighty Considerations, which may serve to convince us how much we all stand oblig'd to practise this general Duty, which we are so strictly commanded.

In explaining the Terms, it is very remarkable, that the Greek word *πολιτεία*, which is render'd *Let your Conversation be*, implies, that they were Citizens of a City which is above, and naturally bears this Construction: As ye are Citizens of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, let your Course of Life be suitable thereto, behaving your selves as may be most for the good of the publick Society to which you are related.

Phil. 3. 20. And so the original word *πολιτεύμα*, which is render'd *Conversation*, strictly signifies a Citizenship, or being free of the Heavenly City, but it's likely may also comprehend the Life, Behaviour and Manners of such as are free of that City; and no doubt but the Greek word before-mention'd, in our Text, refers to their being Citizens of Heaven, not in actual possession, but free of it and intitled to its Privileges; and as such it earnestly requires them to behave themselves, and to live as those, who tho now in this lower World, yet are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and are of the *Jerusalem* which is above, and are come by Faith unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly *Jerusalem*; and therefore are concern'd to live in some Likeness and Resemblance to those blessed Inhabitants, and so by Grace to be made meet for the Inheritance

tance of the Saints in Light; which who walks as becomes the Gospel of Christ, is to a good degree fitted and prepar'd for.

2ly. I am to describe to you what that Conversation is which comports with, and becomes the Gospel of Christ.

(1.) Then, 'tis an humble, lowly and meek Deportment of our selves in the whole Course of our Lives; and so necessary and becoming it is, that our blessed Saviour enjoins it upon our first Entrance on the Profession of the Christian Religion, requiring us to learn it of him, *who Mat. 11. was meek and lowly in heart.* And a most exact Pattern has the Son of God given us to imitate, as near as possible we can; and the holy Apostle enforces the Duty and Virtue of Humility, from the Example of Christ, exhorting them *to let Phil. 2. 5, the same Mind be in them, which was also in 6, 7, 8. Christ Jesus:* which refers chiefly to his voluntary Abasement, who tho he were in the Form of God, not an accidental but an essential Form, as the Greek word *μορφή* signifies, and therefore thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no Reputation, and took on him the Form of a Servant, and humbled himself in the most stupendous manner, not only at last in suffering Death for the Sins of Mankind, but also in the whole Course of his Life antecedent to his Suffering: for his Gestures, his Behaviour, what he said, and what he did, were a most evident Proof of the Lowliness and Meekness of his Mind. And of so great Concern is this Divine Frame and Temper, that St. Paul, when he presses the *Ephesians* to walk worthy of Eph. 4. 2. their Christian Calling, shews them that it is to be with all Lowliness and Meekness. And the same Apostle exhorts the *Colossians*, among o-

Col. 3. 12, ther Christian Virtues, to put on Humbleness of Mind, and Meekness. And St. Peter calls upon

1 Pet. 5. 5. the Christians to be cloth'd with Humility. This Virtue is in direct opposition to Pride, and mainly consists in a sober, modest and lowly Opinion of our selves and our Endowments, or in not valuing our selves beyond what is due and proper, upon the account of any thing we are possess'd of, whether it be internal or external; upon which follows a submissive and condescending Deportment in every part of our Life, according to our several Capacities.

It is that Grace governing in our Minds, by which we are dispos'd to esteem others better than our selves; and the want of this Grace, and its happy Influence in the Conduct of our Lives, has so often caus'd great Contention in the Church of Christ; for by Pride, which is opposite to this Virtue, the Wiseman tells us, comes Contention: For when Men grow heady and high-minded, then they arraign their Brethren, and break the Peace of Sion, and under a colour of Zeal for God and Religion, they abandon the prime and chief Virtues of Christianity, without which they can never appear to be Christ's Disciples, having not learnt of him this necessary Grace; which, as I may say, is a constituent part of our Holy Religion; and of no less Import is that Meekness that is recommended to us in the Texts before cited. Nor can we ever walk sutable to the Gospel without it; for it is a Virtue by which we are not easily provok'd or offended, and it denotes to us Easiness, Gentleness and Sweetness of Temper, in opposition to Moroseness, Frowardness, Sourness and Passion; it includes our forgiving Injuries, bearing Reproaches, and recompensing Good

Good for Evil; it is call'd a meek and quiet Spirit, which in the sight of God is of great Price.

And what can more adorn our Holy Profession than such a sweet and divine Temper? for indeed all fierce and rough Methods are not the way of bringing Profelytes to the Church, or keeping them there; but we are to be gentle to all Men, in *Meekness* instructing those that oppose themselves; to speak Evil of no Man, to be no Brawlers, but gentle, shewing all Meekness to all Men: And we are exhorted to put on *Meekness and Long-Suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another*: and this is a God-like Virtue. And such are declar'd *blessed*, being to some good degree qualify'd to inherit the new Heaven and new Earth, wherein shall dwell Righteousness.

2. That Conversation which becomes the Gospel of Christ, is also peaceable and quiet both in the Church, and with all Men as much as possible: and therefore St. Paul exhorts the *Hebrews, to follow Peace with all Men*; and the *Thessalonians, to be at Peace among themselves*: and among the rest, comprehended in walking worthy our high Calling as Christians, this is none of the least part to be regarded, that we keep the *Unity of Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. But how disagreeable to this is the Practice of too many, who upon little occasions break and disturb the Quiet of the Church of Christ, as tho the Peace and Tranquillity thereof was but of little worth, and to be sacrific'd upon every Change of Humour, or every new Impression that's made upon Mens Brains, or new Ideas form'd in their Minds, whether reasonable or not? But this unhappy Temper and Deportment

is introduc'd under the specious Pretences of being valiant for the Truth: and from hence some think they have the liberty to anathematize others, who are more modest and sparing in their Censures (and less dogmatical and positive) in respect of such who differ from them in mysterious Points. 'Tis true, our Peace and Unity is to be such, as is consistent with Purity and Truth; we are not for Peace-sake to betray or give up the great and plain Doctrines of the Gospel, or admit Heresy in the Church of God: but still we must be very careful how we arraign pious good Men who differ from us, especially about such sublime Points, which we can never in this World fully understand (for now we know but in part) but they seem rather to be design'd for nobler Subjects, to exercise our Understanding, and imploy our Contemplation upon in the next World for ever, when our Faculties shall be rais'd up to the highest Pitch and Perfection that they are capable of; when we shall no longer see as thro a Glass darkly, *but Face to Face*, and know as we are known. But if we would inhabit those calm and blisful Regions, we must live in Peace while in this World, or else we can never be fit Inhabitants for the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, which will be absolutely free from all Contention and Strife: for all that blessed and glorify'd Family will live for ever in the strictest Friendship and uninterrupted Quiet; there will be no Jars nor Contentions there; and therefore let us all labour for that Wisdom which is from above, which is pure and peaceable, that so we may have some good resemblance in our Minds, and in our Lives, with what we shall ever be, if we are so happy as to be admitted into the Presence of God in Glory.

1 Cor. 13.
12.

(3.) If

(3.) If we wou'd live futable to the Gospel, and so to a heavenly Citizenship, we must live in Charity and Love. This is strictly enjoin'd in the Gospel, and I think is much oftner inculcated than any other Duty; which shews how backward we are to observe it, and of how great moment it is: It is the true Characteristick of Christ's Disciples; it is the new and great Command which our Lord gave his Disciples not long before he suffer'd: *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another.* And we are exhorted to follow after Charity, and to let all our things be done with Charity; to walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us. And this is also intimated in walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are call'd; which is to be with Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love: And we are requir'd by St. John to love in deed and in truth, and to dwell in Love, which the Apostle says is to dwell in God, who is Love. And St. Peter exhorts us to love one another with a pure Heart fervently; and above all things to have fervent Charity among our selves. And when St. Paul advis'd the Colossians to put on as the Elect of God many Christian Graces; above all these, says he, put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness. For by a Metaphor it is compar'd to a Garment, which Christians are exhorted to put on; and it is compar'd to a Bond or Ligament, which ties and unites all the Members of the Church together; it is a kind and brotherly Affection one to another. By this Grace we are engag'd to do all good Offices one for another, and to take pleasure in promoting another's Happiness. It is in opposition to Hatred and Malice, and all Rancour and Ill-Nature: and this Grace prompts us to be

be of a compassionate and sympathizing Disposition to all Men, *whether under Affliction of Body or Mind.* This obliges us to put a modest Construction upon what another says or does, and not to strain things, and draw unnatural Consequences from them, on purpose to expose good Men and their honest Intentions. If Charity did govern more in our Souls, we should have more Peace and Concord in the Church of

1 Cor. 13. God: for *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, is not easily mov'd, thinketh no evil, beareth all things,* as far as will consist with the Truth, Purity, and Simplicity of the Gos-

1 Cor. 13. pel. And it is a Grace that will never fail: in
8. Heaven there will be a continual Exercise of it; all that blessed Society will love God with an inconceivable Love and Complacency, as the Chief Good; and one another, as happy Sharrers in the Divine Favour. Their Hearts will be united in the strictest Friendship, and be forever exerting themselves in the brightest Instances of Divine Love and Affection. And this, one would think, should be very attractive and exciting to us, while in our militant State, to come up as far as we can to that desirable Frame and heavenly Temper.

(4.) In order to walk suitable to the Gospel, our Conversation must be just and righteous: We must observe our Saviour's Rule, *Therefore*

Mat. 7. 12 *all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even to them;* that is to say, in all our Intercourses one with another, we should do what is just and equal, to the utmost of our

Rom. 13. Capacity yielding to every one what of right belongs to them, and to follow after Righteous-

7, 8. ness, to render to all their Due. And this ex-

2 Tim. 6. 11. cludes all Fraud, Deceit, and Tricking in Trade
1 Thess. 4. 6. and

and Traffick one with another : No Man is to go beyond and defraud his Brother in any matter, for *God is the Avenger of all such*. And all Oppression and Gripping upon the Necessity of another, and all Detraction and Evil-speaking, which is an invading our Neighbour's Right, is forbidden in that of doing righteously. For every Man has a natural Right, as he belongs to the common Society of Mankind, to be defended and protected in his Person, Estate, and Reputation. And as we should not traduce nor falsely asperse an innocent Person our selves, so neither should we permit another to do it, when it is in our power to hinder it. And this is a great piece of Justice which we owe to all Men, and to our Christian Brethren in particular.

(5.) In deporting our selves becoming the Gospel. Our Conversation must be holy and pure : and therefore St. Paul exhorts the *Corinthians* to cleanse themselves from all *Filthiness of 2Cor.7.1.* *Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God*. And the *Ephesians* were enjoin'd to put off their former Conversation, which was corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts, and to put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness. And this the Grace of God teacheth, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World. And we are requir'd to follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness, without which we cannot see God. And St. Peter exhorts the Believers to be holy in all manner of Conversation; and seeing, says he, all these things shall be dissolv'd, what manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness? One great Design of the Gospel was to make us holy both in

in Heart and Life; and without this, no Profession of Religion can do us any Good: for Religion consists in the Practice of real Godliness, in mortifying our Lusts, and subduing our Passions, and attaining by the Grace of God to a divine Habit of hating Sin, and delighting in God, and all that is good and truly vertuous and holy; by which we come to desire a clearer sight of God, and a fuller Fruition of him, who is perfectly holy, just, and good, that so we may be wrought into his Likeness. And this must needs be a material part of the Christian Conversation, for this bears some Resemblance to the Holiness of the heavenly Inhabitants, who constantly enjoy the Presence of God, and behold his Face. And we are requir'd to act and live like such who are ally'd and related to that Celestial Company, as such who by Faith discern our Interest in the new *Jerusalem* (tho as yet we are at a distance from it) and therefore are to walk agreeable to such a Relation. And thus I have said all I think proper as to the Christian Conversation.

I am now in the third place to lay before you some of those Reasons and weighty Considerations which may serve to convince us how much we are all concern'd to practise this general Duty, which we are so strictly commanded in our Text.

Reason 1. And first, consider it is a divine Precept, and how inexcusable we must be in the great Day of Account, if we dispute against or will not obey so reasonable an Injunction. Consider the Energy and Force of those Scriptures which in the preceding part of the Discourse I have read to you, that enjoin it upon us as an indispensable Duty.

12. *Reas.* Let us remember, it's what all Christians oblige themselves to when they enter into Covenant with God: they then engage to serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and to conform to the Rules of the Gospel; and that is to walk becoming their holy Profession. Now consider, it would be a great violation of that Solemn Covenant to be remiss in this Duty; and it would be to bring great Guilt upon our selves, and a most ungenerous Act not to do and perform what we voluntarily consented to, especially when we remember that our Heavenly Father is never backward to afford us the Aids of his Grace to enable us to perform our Duty and do his Will.

13. *Reas.* Let us call to mind, that as the Christian Religion is the best Religion in the World, consider'd in its Primitive Excellency, it will be a great dishonour to God, and to the Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession Jesus Christ, if we do not adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour with a Life suitable thereto. So ill-natur'd are many and unjust, that they turn the Faults of particular Persons upon a whole Community, and charge the very Cause of Christ with the Miscarriages of his Votaries: which should excite us to great care and watchfulness, lest an unsuitable Walk should hinder others from receiving Christ, and submitting to his Doctrine. The efficacy of the Gospel is in part seen by the Effect it has upon the Lives and Manners of Men; and by this others in part steer their Course.

14. *Reas.* Let us consider, that without this Christian Life, our whole Profession, as to our selves, will be in vain, and our Souls lost for ever;

ever; but if we live this Life, it will be well with us hereafter: for tho we can never merit Heaven by all the good we are capable of doing, yet there is as much necessity of a Divine and Spiritual Life as if we did; tho when we have done all, we must say, *we are unprofitable Servants*, and the Eternal Reward will be of Grace and not of Debt. But still we are to labour that we may glorify God here, since we can never else expect to enjoy him hereafter. A bare Profession of Religion will never do without something more real and substantial: The Form of Godliness is excellent and very serviceable, when join'd

Heb. 12. 1. with the Power of it; *Let us therefore lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that easily besets us, and run with Patience the Race set before us. Let us follow the great and good Examples we have in the Word of God, and in an especial manner that of our blessed Saviour; and then we shall at last receive the end of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls, and have an Entrance minister'd abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And now I come to the

2. *Observ.* in our Text, which is a particular Exhortation to a firm and constant Union and Agreement one with another in the Profession of our holy Religion; signify'd by *standing fast in one Spirit, with one Mind.* And to this I need not say much, because it has in part fell in our way already. This may intimate and imply, as much as we can, to be of one Understanding, and especially of one Heart and Affection. To which agrees the Advice in Chapter the 2d, verse the 2d, *To be like minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind.* And

And the *Corinthians* are enjoin'd to avoid Divisions, 1 Cor. 1.
 and to be perfectly join'd together in the same Mind, 10.
 and the same Judgment. We must endeavour to Ephel. 4.
 keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. 3.
 And it is recorded to the Honour of the Primitive Christians, That they were of one Heart, and Acts 4.
 one Soul. And it would be happy for the Church of Christ if it was so now: but now Men are so quarrelsome, that for little matters they will break the Unity and Peace of the Church. We can never expect to be exactly of one Mind in matters meerly nice and speculative, which are like different Features in Mens Faces, which distinguish them from one another, but do not change the human Shape. We well secure and keep the Unity of the Faith, when we agree in all the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Religion, and the foundation Principles of Christ's Heb. 6.
 Doctrine: Let us therefore keep up a strict Union in the Things of God, and not differ where in reality there is no difference except in Expression. Consider how much Contention, and Strife, and Disunion weakens the Interest of Christ and the Gospel; And how good and pleasant it is for Brethren to live together in Unity. 1, 2.

3. *Observ.* I now come to the third and last Observation; which is, That we are enjoin'd and requir'd unanimously to exert our utmost endeavours in our respective Stations, to keep, defend, and propagate the Faith of the Gospel: And this is called a *striving* for it. This Faith I conceive chiefly refers to the Doctrine of Faith, call'd a *Form of sound Words*, which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to hold fast; and which the same Apostle to Titus terms *sound Doctrine*; which some, as is there predicted, would not endure. It is call'd the Faith which was once deliver'd to the Saints. Jude 3.

This we are to keep to, and contend for, and do what we can to advance and propagate. It signifies the Christian Religion, as set up and establish'd by Jesus Christ in opposition to Judaism and Heathenism; that glorious Gospel of the Son of God, which contains in it the clearest and fullest Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, as to what we are to do and to believe. This would admit of a very large Discourse, but I shall avoid prolixity, and shall a little touch upon that part of it relating to the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; which is indeed a very great Mystery, and what ought to be treated on with a great deal of Modesty and Caution: the furious and giddy debating on this inscrutable Subject has prov'd a dishonour to that God who is infinite and perfect, and whom our shallow Conceptions and Minds can never form an exact and adequate Idea of; for he is Incomprehensible: Yet some unthinking Persons have as familiarly discours'd of the Divine Majesty, and with as much freedom as if they had been in the celestial Orbs, and admitted into Heaven, and so had obtain'd the Privilege of the Angels to behold the Face of God. Alas! it is but a little our finite Natures are capable of knowing and understanding of God; and therefore we should be very tender how we censure one another about such an inexplicable Mystery; for all good Christians acknowledg One God and no more, and that this One God is the Object of Divine Worship and Praise. Let us not therefore strain one another's Words, or wrest them from their plain import, and condemn such as are vertuous and holy, because they can not conform to our Mode of speaking. Let us not force our own Creeds and Interpretations upon

upon

upon other Men, as a Standard to measure them by. 'Tis true, Articles of Faith are highly necessary to keep false Doctrine out of the Church, and the Abettors of it; but then let us be sure that such Articles be very clear, and consonant to the plain Expression and Meaning of the Word of God.

Some Men take a sort of pleasure in aspersing and stigmatizing at every turn such as differ from them with the name of Hereticks: a very uncharitable way it is, and oftentimes very unjust. Some Persons seem to affect to be popular, and to make a noise, if it be only to stir up Strife and Contention. I acknowledg it is highly necessary to do what we can to keep the Church pure both in Life and Doctrine; but then let us in the Spirit of Meekness instruct such as we think are out of the way, and pity them wherein they err. But that I may not leave you in the dark as to what I have to say relating to the Point before us, I think this is plain and evident from the Scripture, That in the Godhead there is Father, Son and Holy Ghost; That as God the Father is an eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, spiritual Being, so our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect to his Divine Nature, is of the same Essence with his Father; the Divine $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omega$, or Word, which Joh. 1. 1. was with God, and was God, and so is properly Psal. 45. 6. declar'd to be God; and upon this account many Heb. 1. 8. of the Titles which are ascrib'd to God the Tit. 2. 13. Father, are given to his Son Jesus Christ: he is call'd the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Almighty*. He Rev. 1. 8. He is not call'd God upon the account of Deputation, as Magistrates and Rulers sometimes were in respect of Office; but in regard of the Identity and Sameness of his Divine Nature, and his
near

near Relation to God his Father. And for the Good and Salvation of Men, he had a Body prepar'd him, and he was made of the Seed of David according to the Flesh. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, says the Evangelist John, as the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.

Heb. 10. 5. Rom. 1. 3. Joh. 1. 14. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Great is the Mystery of Godliness! God was manifest in the Flesh, there was an Assumption of human Nature; upon which account he is call'd Man.

This now is what the Scriptures assert with respect to God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ; and let us be satisfy'd with the Account the Scripture gives us, and not be wise above what is written. We can never exactly account for or define the Manner of the Union of the Divine and Human Nature; it's above our reach, we cannot see thro such a Secret and Mystery, it is enough for us to believe it as so reveal'd and declar'd. And with respect to the Holy Ghost, it's asserted, that he is one with the Father and Word, bearing Record in Heaven; and these three are one: that is, as I understand it, in Essence as well as Agreement.

And this I take to be a pretty plain and express Account of a part of what the Scriptures testify in relation to this great Mystery; and I wish it may be of use to us all. There might have been much more said, but I did not design to do more than just hint these things to you. And now to close the whole with some brief Improvement.

Such of you, my Brethren, who stand in a Ministerial Capacity, are in a particular manner concern'd to live futable to the Gospel of Christ,

Christ, to be exemplary both in Life and Doctrine, and to be a Pattern to the Believers, and to promote the Unity and Peace of the Church of Christ; to avoid all Strife and Contention about Words, that tend only to subvert the Hearers, and to join heartily together to advance, defend and propagate the Gospel of our Redeemer in its Purity and native Simplicity; to watch against every thing that may have a tendency to shake our Faith and Church-Constitution, and do all we can to support it in its Beauty and Excellency. Let us take heed to our selves and our Doctrine, and deliver sound Truths, which may not be liable to any just exception, but which may tend to the Benefit and Advantage of all: and this will be a happy striving together for the Gospel-Faith.

And with respect to private Christians, what concerns you also is to live in a strict Conformity to the Rules of the Gospel, to adorn it with a futable Life, to recommend your holy Profession to others by a holy and pious Conversation, and by being quiet and peaceable in the Church of Christ where you stand. Take care to preserve Unity and Oneness of Mind, and do what you can to promote the Cause and Interest of Christ. According to your respective Abilities, encourage and assist such as are set over you in the Lord, to take the Care and Oversight of your Souls; the less you are capable of doing one way to promote Religion, the more should you do another, that is, in being ready to every good Work, forward to communicate, willing to distribute.

Now the God of Peace, that brought gain from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the

the Sheep, thro the Blood of the everlasting Co-
venant, make you perfect in every good Work to
do his Will, working in you that which is well
pleasing in his Sight, thro Jesus Christ; to whom
be Glory for ever and ever.

And with respect to private Christians, what
concerns you also is active in a third Con-
fession, you are to the Rules of the Gospel, to adorn it
with a festive life, to recommend your holy
conduct by a life of holiness and purity, to
be a light to the world, and to be a witness to
the Church of Christ, where you stand. Take care
to preserve Unity and Concord of Mind, and
do what you can to promote the same and in-
terest of Christ. According to your respective
Abilities; endeavour that such as are for ever
you in the Lord, to take the Care and Oversight
of your Souls; the less you are capable of doing
one way to promote Religion, the more should you
do another; that is, in being ready to every good
Work, forward to communicate, willing to dil-

live together for the common good.
And with respect to private Christians, what
concerns you also is active in a third Con-
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FINIS.

Now the God of Peace that bringeth
the Lord our Lord Jesus Christ
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